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PROGRAM Panorama STATION WTTG-TV

DATE April 2, 1986 12:00 Noon CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT Former Polish Ambassador Spasowski Interviewed

MAURY POVICH: Please welcome to Panorama the highest-ranking communist official ever who basically said good-bye to communism and defected to the United States. He is the former Ambassador of Poland to the United States, and now the author of this book, "The Liberation of One." He is Ambassador Romwald Spasowski.

Nice to have you with us, Mr. Ambassador.

ROMWALD SPASOWSKI: Thank you for having me.

POVICH: This happened on December 20th, 1981.

SPASOWSKI: 'Eighty-one. Yes.

POVICH: That's a little more than five years ago. Did it take you five years to write the book, or to think about writing the book?

SPASOWSKI: Well, originally, I was making speeches. I made about 30 speeches all over the country denouncing the Jaruzelski regime, the crackdown, the brutality, inhumanity which took place in Poland at that time. And after this, I wished to write a book. And I have started several times, until I found the way of expression which is contained in this book.

POVICH: You are a supporter of the Solidarity movement.

SPASOWSKI: Yes. I am an ardent supporter...

POVICH: You were...

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SPASOWSKI: I was never a member of Solidarity. I was associated with the establishment, which, as you know, was always very strongly against Solidarity. But I was very moved by the Solidarity movement.

POVICH: Were you able to speak up within the conference rooms of the Polish government for Solidarity when you were still Ambassador and in the diplomatic corps, or not?

SPASOWSKI: Well, to a certain degree. To a certain degree, I was speaking about Solidarity. But knowing and meeting people on the very top, I knew how much resentment they felt towards Solidarity, if not hatred.

POVICH: How close did the Russians come to mobilizing and moving into Poland because of Solidarity?

SPASOWSKI: I think that the Russians were very much afraid of Solidarity movement in Poland. They did not expect that there would be such nationwide movement in support of freedom and human rights in Poland.

But what they have done, they have done, I think, very cunningly and very deliberately. As you know, they were demonstrating power all around Poland, military maneuvers, conferences, meetings with generals, with commanders-in-chief, and so on. At the same time inside Poland, special crackdown troops were prepared and trained, having in mind the final crackdown on Solidarity.

It was not easy. Solidarity embraced ten million people. That means the whole population, including families.

POVICH: And what of Solidarity today? You have said in the past, I know, in your speeches that it will live in the hearts of the Polish people. Do you think it's still in the hearts?

SPASOWSKI: Absolutely. Solidarity is very much alive.

I would make three points: Solidarity lives in the hearts and minds of the people, absolutely. Solidarity shapes the social life in Poland, the interhuman relations. And Solidarity lives in the underground in a way of publications, many tens of publications which are circulating all over the country.

POVICH: Is Lech Waleska still an important symbol, or not?

SPASOWSKI: Absolutely. As at the very beginning, as of

August '80, when he became the leader, the symbol of Solidarity, he still is the symbol for the Polish people.

POVICH: We're running out of time, but I want to ask you this: There has been some criticism of the way the United States has treated those who have defected from communist countries. Are you satisfied with the way your case was handled?

SPASOWSKI: I am very satisfied. I have received from the American Administrations -- Administration assistance, support, protection. And what I like most, I had enough quiet time to write my message to the American people and to the world.

POVICH: It is a remarkable book. It is not only the story of his defection and of what is going on in Poland, here's a man from a very sensitive family, who during World War II harbored those Polish Jews who were sought out by the Nazis. The Ambassador's father was a remarkable hero in his own right. And it's deep in the history of this country. And his story is "The Liberation of One."

I thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador.